

THOMAS GILCREASE ESTATE
(Gilcrease Museum)
1400 North Gilcrease Museum Drive
Tulsa
Tulsa
Oklahoma

HALS OK-25
OK-25

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY

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HALS NO. OK-25

Location: 1400 N. Gilcrease Museum Drive, Tulsa, Tulsa County, Oklahoma
Lat: 36.17354 Long: -96.02126

Significance: The Gilcrease Estate was home to Thomas Gilcrease, founder of the Gilcrease Oil Company and the Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art. Gilcrease, a passionate collector of American art, artifacts, and historical documents, especially those pertaining to the American West and American Indians, opened his collection to the citizens of Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1949. Today, the Gilcrease Museum, which is a designated Oklahoma Landmark, houses the largest collection of art and artifacts of the American West in the world. It's beautifully manicured Eclectically-styled landscape includes 23 acres of creatively themed gardens designed by the Tulsa based Planning Design Group and landscape architect Jacob (Joe) Braun of the Jacob Braun Company.

History: Thomas Gilcrease, part Creek Indian, received 160 acres near Glenpool, Oklahoma from the Creek Nation in 1899. In 1905, the Glenn Pool Oil Field was discovered, and by 1917 Gilcrease was amassing an impressive fortune from thirty-two oil wells on his land. In 1922, he started the Gilcrease Oil Company. After a trip to Europe, Gilcrease developed a love for the arts and began collecting what would become the largest collection of art on the American West in the world. To showcase his increasing collection, Gilcrease opened the Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art in 1949 across from his Tulsa residence which he purchased in 1913. In 1955, after Gilcrease suffered some financial misfortunes, ownership of the museum, home, collections, and the land on which it sat was transferred to the City of Tulsa. Upon his death in 1962, Gilcrease was buried in a private mausoleum on the property. In the late 1980s, the museum was expanded to house the entire Gilcrease collection as it underwent a \$12.5 million renovation designed by architect Britt Embry, principal of Murray Jones Murray. Paying homage to Gilcrease's Creek heritage, part of the museum resembles a barrel vaulted Creek longhouse. During the late 1980s and most of the 1990s, Tulsa-based Planning Design Group and the Jacob Braun Company designed several themed gardens on 23 of the 460 acres surrounding the museum and residence. The gardens include a rock garden, Victorian garden, Colonial garden, and a Pre-Columbian garden. In 2008, the City of Tulsa and the University of Tulsa entered into a joint partnership to own and manage the property.

Sources: "Gilcrease, The Museum of the Americas," <http://www.gilcrease.org> (accessed August 20, 2009).

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View at the entrance to the Gilcrease Museum (Steve Eilers, August 28, 2009).



View along a pathway in the Friendship Garden (Steve Eilers, August 28, 2009).